

community, a commitment to country, and showing up every day and getting the job done, I think the way Cal would want us to tip our hats to him would be to step up to the plate and do our jobs and to do it the Ripken way. That is what I would like to do.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. NELSON of Nebraska). Without objection, it is so ordered.

SENATE AGENDA

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I understand there are only a few minutes remaining in morning business, which is our opportunity to talk about a wide range of topics. We have a lot of important business going on in the Senate. We have the Homeland Security appropriations bill, which we want to pass quickly to keep our Nation safe. Then we are going to turn to the 9/11 Commission recommendations. Most Americans recall after 9/11, we appointed a very good bipartisan group to come up with suggestions to make America safer. Unfortunately, those suggestions have not been acted on, and each year the commission gives the Government a failing grade when it comes to their compliance, so we want to change that situation. This year, with the new Congress, we passed the implementation of these recommendations and hope to bring those to the floor this week and have them enacted.

We also have pending major ethics reform. Most people are, unfortunately, inured to the prospect of stories of corruption in Washington. Some of the events that have happened over the last several years have been horrendous, leading to the prosecution of Members of Congress and many lobbyists in town. It is time to change that situation. We have a bill that will move us dramatically in the right direction, the most significant ethics reform in the history of Congress. It has been caught up in a lot of political debate and wrangling. Now is the time to move it forward, enact it into the rules, the law of the land, and apply it to the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Then next week comes a critically important bill. There are 47 million uninsured Americans, many of them children. Right now we have a program where we provide Federal funds to States so they can help us in insuring those children. We have about 6 million children who are now covered by this plan, kids who otherwise would not have health insurance.

Incidentally, most of them are children of parents who are working, who go to work every day. They are not poor enough to have the Government

insure them, and they are not wealthy enough to insure themselves. They get caught in the middle. Six million children have protection today.

The program expires September 30. We want to make sure those kids are not left without coverage, and we have another 9 million children who are eligible who have not been brought in. The Senate Finance Committee is going to expand the number covered from 6 million to 9 million nationwide.

I wish we could do more. We should cover them all. Why wouldn't we as Americans want our kids to have basic health insurance protection? Unfortunately, even though our bill is bipartisan, it is reasonable, it is within our budget, the White House said the President will veto it. The President's reason for vetoing the children's health insurance bill? It is hard to believe, but he says it is unfair to private health insurance companies. Unfair to private health insurance companies? Most Americans understand that for most of those companies, each year means higher premiums and lower coverage, and many of those companies have failed to come forward to find ways to bring Americans into health insurance coverage. There are not going to be many tears shed for that industry. We should have our concern and focus on the children who are going to be left behind when it comes to health insurance if the President vetoes this bill.

Next week we will focus on that legislation. We will try to get down and pass this, get together with the House of Representatives, and send it to the President as quickly as possible.

In August, we have a 3- or 4-week recess, which I assume we will be taking most of, and then come back in September in the first week. There are a lot of appropriations bills to consider at that time. We will go back to the Defense authorization bill and a very important national debate on the war in Iraq. The administration promises us September 15 to give us a status report, as required by law.

Most of the indicators are that the violence continues in Iraq. The Government continues to disappoint us and, unfortunately, American deaths continue to mount. That debate in September is going to be a critical watershed debate. We need to have more Republican Senators cross the aisle and join us to call for a new policy in Iraq. So far 4 of the 49 Republicans have come to our side. We need 11. I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to work for a cooperative bipartisan approach to a new direction in Iraq.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

The Senator from Texas.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, last evening the majority leader and I had an exchange on the Senate floor with regard to a proposed amendment by

our side that would enhance Federal spending on border security measures and interior enforcement by \$3 billion. While it is fair to say there was virtually universal support on this side of the aisle, there was some objection on the other side of the aisle, so that amendment was defeated.

Then the majority leader came back with a proposal that would strip some of the language from that amendment, but nevertheless would commit \$3 billion to border security. I told the majority leader that I believed it should also include a way to spend that money not just on the border but also for interior enforcement of our immigration laws. In particular, I mentioned the sad phenomenon of roughly 600,000 absconders, people who have been ordered deported and who have simply gone underground rather than obey that lawful order from a court, or people who have actually been deported and then reentered the country after they have been deported. Both of those categories of individuals are known as absconders. They are, under the Immigration and Naturalization Act, felons.

I thought it was important that if we were going to be serious about enforcing our immigration laws we not just deal with the border, as important as that is, but we also deal with interior enforcement.

We were unable to reach an agreement last night, but I am pleased to say the majority leader was generous enough to call me last night and to tell me he wanted to look more closely at the language we had proposed. I take it from some of his remarks this morning on the floor that it is likely we will be able to reach some sort of agreement that will see those funds in this bill, \$3 billion, where the Federal Government will finally do what it has advertised and promised to do for a long time, and that is to actually put the resources behind border security and enforcement of our immigration laws, rather than promise a lot and deliver very little.

I am grateful to the majority leader for working with me on that issue. I am hopeful Senator GRAHAM, who was the principal proponent of the border security amendment yesterday that I was proud to cosponsor, will be back here at 10:30 a.m. when we get back on the bill to talk about that amendment. I hope we can reach an agreement. It will go a long way toward beginning to regain the lost confidence and trust of the American people when it comes to our broken immigration system.

If there is one diagnosis I would make from our immigration debate over the last few weeks, it has been that people do not trust the Federal Government to actually do what it promises to do in this area. Where we have to start is on a firm foundation of border security and interior enforcement and from that build to a more comprehensive approach that deals with all aspects of the problem.